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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

Remarks-

Release No. 0169.93

by
Mike Espy
Secretary of Agriculture
Introduction of David Osborne, author of
***Reinventing Government*,**
speaking before employees of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
March 3, 1993

Introduction -- the Need for Change

I'd like to begin this morning by thanking Larry Slagle and the men and women of the Department of Agriculture's personnel department for inviting David Osborne. Mr. Osborne's book, *Reinventing Government* is one of President Clinton's favorites. He calls it nothing less than a "Blueprint." It helped him win the presidency, and he intends to use it to help change the federal government.

I take the president's wishes very seriously, as everyone must if this Department and this government are to succeed in the coming years.

Back during the Great Depression, people were losing confidence in the American economy and its ability to provide jobs, pay good wages and produce the goods we all wanted.

Today, most Americans feel the same way about government -- that it may not be up to performing its basic functions. Our federal deficit doubled in the last 12 years. Many of our states and cities are nearly bankrupt. And surveys show that Americans inside and out of government feel we're spending more and getting less from Washington.

What has happened is that the world has changed and our government has not. Big, centralized, departments taking orders from the top may have made sense for most of this century. But our society, our lives, and our problems are far more complex than those of our parents and grandfathers. And the technological revolution of the twentieth century means that our problems change and spread faster.

Business has changed. The non-profit sector has changed. Even some parts of our local, state and federal governments have changed.

Now it's our turn.

What is "Reinventing Government?"

So what does it mean to "reinvent government," anyway? Let me start by explaining what it isn't.

It's not about spending more or spending less -- or just stretching tight budgets a little bit farther. It's not about huge layoffs to satisfy an angry public or some arbitrary budget formula.

Reinventing government is about real change and how to achieve it. It means a government that is entrepreneurial every day -- using the same resources in new ways to be more effective.

Now that's a slogan. And federal employees are used to new management slogans every four years.

But David Osborne is going to help us put meat on the bones. His ideas can be boiled down to 10 key concepts. Let me mention a few of them.

Who can do the Job Best?

Several of these ideas involve letting government do what it does best and letting people do what they do best.

He'll talk about how government works best when it helps catalyze and guide change, instead of trying to change people's lives for them. As he puts it, we should be steering the boat, not rowing it.

Let's say someone agrees to paint your house. Whose house will he do a better job on: yours or his? When communities are given more control over the programs that affect their lives, they will focus more on making them work better and less on complaining that government is out of touch and ineffective -- and then demanding more services for less money.

Give More Responsibility to Front-Line Government Workers

But reinventing government doesn't mean just moving power and responsibility from government to people. We believe in government, and we want to make it better. Reinventing government means giving more power to our front-line people in government, who know more about these problems than virtually anyone else. Part of that is remembering why we are here. A lot of you spend most of your day complying with regulations that have been piled on over the years by people without the front-line experience you have. It gets really easy to forget that we are all here to serve the American people, not the USDA rule book. What if we designated one of our agencies as an experimental laboratory, and gave them permission to throw out the rule book and let them figure out how best to get the job done. Wouldn't you want to be part of that office?

And think about how we evaluate what we do. How many of us get trapped into defending our programs based on how much money we've spent, instead of how well we've served consumers and farmers? When someone paints our house, we don't say they did a good job if they spent a lot of money on paints or brushes. We look at the house. How much time are we spending actually measuring how useful we are to the public? What could matter more?

At a fundamental level, it's time for us to rethink the centralized decision-making structure we have relied on for decades. Who does a better job, someone relying on a boss in Washington or someone relying on training, experience and a sense of purpose? The USDA has over 100,000 employees. The problems you are working to help solve are complex and constantly changing. Yet the old model of government says that problems have to run up and down the chain of command before they can be solved.

But problems don't wait for the chain of command -- they often change into new problems by the time the old answer finally arrives. And good ideas get lost on the way up and the way back down. It's time for more people at the outer levels of government to be given the authority to use their front-line knowledge and their God-given skills to solve problems, not just take orders and write reports.

Use Creativity and Common-Sense to do More with Less

If you're in government, you're always making do with less than you'd like. And if you're not, I want to talk with you after this speech.

We're constantly strapped for cash, and we're being asked to cut our budgets. Sometimes we throw up our hands. But what if we charged reasonable fees for some services? What if we invested money in projects that would cost us now but earn us more over the long run? As I've said, I don't have all the expertise to know where we can do that -- you have to help me.

Second, think for a second about how we discourage offices and agencies from saving money. Everybody knows the old budget game, where you lose your budget money if you don't spend all of last year's allocation -- even if you were efficient enough to save some. What if you got to keep that money and spend it on some of the good ideas you can't get money for? Wouldn't you work even harder to save taxpayer money?

With the money we saved, we could spend more on what David Osborne calls "Anticipatory Government." How many of our programs are devoted to fixing

problems instead of preventing them? I'm proud of the WIC program, because it saves lives and starts children off right. But WIC also saves the American people a lot of health care costs down the road, when healthy babies spend the day with their families instead of doctors. Think back to that house you're having painted. You have the painters put on two coats -- so they won't have to come back next year to repaint. As the old proverb says, "a stitch in time saves nine."

We'll hear more about Mr. Osborne's ideas in a minute. But make no mistake -- this is no time to be tinkering around the edges. It's too late not to change.

Changing the System, Not the People

I've met a lot of you in the last four weeks, and I've been impressed with your dedication, your intelligence and experience. Many of you have great ideas and are hungry to make USDA better.

But the old way of doing things stifles innovation and gets in the way. The people who work here aren't the problem; the systems in which they work are.

Beyond Slogans

Now a lot of these ideas probably sound good, but that almost makes you more suspicious. People in Washington are used to hearing catchy slogans and big theories that are irrelevant to what they do every day.

When I talk about reinventing government, I'm talking about real change. Not a slogan written by a 25-year old campaign worker in Little Rock, or a wild-eyed theory dreamed up by a Harvard professor who hasn't worked in an office in 30 years. And it's not just another best-selling management fad that we're going to discard next year.

What I mean is that David Osborne's book is all about innovations that are already in use in creative state and local governments across America. They're not just ideas -- they're saving money and providing better services at this very moment. They work. Washington is just the last place to catch on.

So I'm not talking about what I want to happen. What I'm talking about, and what Mr. Osborne is talking about, and what President Clinton is talking about, is that it's time to stop all the talking and start doing. This isn't just a good idea. It's what we're all about.

What Change Means to You

By now, you should have gotten the idea that reinventing the Department of Agriculture -- making it better and more efficient -- isn't about arbitrary cuts or 80-hour work weeks. As I said a minute ago, the people who work here aren't the problem; the systems in which they work are.

But I'm also not advocating change for the sake of change. I'm not interest-ed in a complicated exercise in desk-shuffling that leaves you doing the same old thing with new distractions. Instead, I want nothing less than for every employee of the Department of Agriculture to do more for their country every single day.

Listen carefully to David Osborne's ideas, and think about what it could mean for your daily life at work. In a nutshell, you will matter. Your expertise and experience will be valued, your ideas will be listened to, and you'll be given more responsibility -- because you are closer to our customers.

If you come up with a new idea, we'll fight to make sure that it's given a try, instead of filing it away or routing it into oblivion.

I've already told you that my door is open. Now it's time to open everyone else's. You'll work in teams that cut across divisional lines, instead of spending time jockeying for turf. You'll be trained to do more, and to do better.

In the end, USDA will serve farmers and consumers better. I think that's satisfying in itself. But if the public get better service, they'll be more willing to reward public servants. It's already happening in many of the communities where these ideas are at work.

Everyone Must Work for Change

Change is coming. We're already reorganizing our Public Affairs function, and I've talked about streamlining our offices out in the field.

But if I thought that any of this could happen by itself, Larry Slagle and I wouldn't need to bring David Osborne here. We could just write another memo. If you remember nothing else of what you hear today, remember that reinventing government is not about what I can do -- it's about setting you free to see what you can do.

Americans these days agree on only a couple of things: that it's time for change, and that they think Washington isn't up to the task. I know they're wrong about the second part. But if we are to prove them wrong, we have to change the way we work every hour of the day and every day of the week.

Not all organizations are equal. Some places are better to work in than others. Some trust their employees with more responsibility than others. Some are more entrepreneurial than others -- regardless of their size. And USDA is going to be one of the better places.

I know we can do it, but only if we have your help. I look forward to working with you in the coming months to make it happen.

In that spirit, I am proud to welcome one of the godfathers of the crusade to reinvent government, Mr. David Osborne.



Testimony-

Release No. 0171.93

of
Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy
 before the
Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development
House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs
March 3, 1993

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss my plans to continue and strengthen the rural housing programs of the Farmers Home Administration. I do have some plans, and I am anxious to share them with you.

I have had a long and close relationship with this agency, and I have a very deep commitment to its programs to help our rural citizens improve their standard of living. The rural housing programs share a special place in my heart because I have seen the difference they can make in the lives of people. My plans, Mr. Chairman, take their theme directly from President Clinton: We are here to make government work for the people, not to make the people work for the government. That is the Clinton team goal, and we are all convinced it can be reached without major expansions of current budget authority.

My plans, therefore, emphasize making every penny of taxpayers' dollars do more, work harder-for the people. Faced with the conflicting problems of the budget deficit and the need for decent housing, we have to be more innovative in getting the utmost from our current resources. We simply have no choice.

This includes improved management of the loan programs to reduce loan losses and improve services to the borrower.

I hope you will help me in this endeavor so that we can lend a helping hand to more people in more ways than we do at present.

Specifically, I have in mind the single-family housing loan program with its recently-added guarantee feature, the low-income home repair loan and grant programs, the housing preservation grant program, and the multi-family rental housing program with its rental assistance.

Single-Family Home Loans

The single-family home loan program is by far the largest of the Farmers Home housing programs and, thus, represents the biggest opportunities for getting more mileage in terms of dollars. It also represents empowerment for low-income people; it enables them to begin building assets like most of the rest of us.

Since this program's inception back in the 1960's, Farmers Home has made more than 2 million single-family home loans for more than \$46 billion. That is a lot of loans, a lot of dollars and homes for 6 million deserving people.

Unfortunately, the job is not done yet.

The effort to provide decent housing for all rural Americans was severely disrupted by the slack economy of recent years. As a result, demand was building up rather than being ameliorated during that time.

Mr. Chairman, the self-help program is a great approach to creating new housing. About 20,000 homes have been built that way, with Farmers Home financing, since 1971, usually in groups of 6 or more families working together with a construction supervisor provided by a Farmers Home grant.

Here we have an opportunity -- in the self-help program -- to promote empowerment as well as skill-building and homeownership. In doing more with less, low-income people put up an average of 1,000 hours per family in sweat equity while doing 65 percent or more of the labor tasks required to build their homes. This substantially reduces their building cost -- to say nothing of building a tremendous sense of achievement and personal pride.

Does this approach pay off otherwise? In other words, is it a safe bet for the government? You bet it is. Self-help borrowers customarily have a delinquency rate one to four percentage points lower than regular single-family home loan borrowers.

Farmers Home is reserving \$30 million in single-family funding this year for self-help borrowers at the national level to leverage with \$15 million of the States' allocated money. This will translate into 950 homes for 3,000 people this year, almost 200 more homes for 650 people than the regular program would produce with the same amount of money.

I plan to increase the reserve for self-help by at least \$10 million, without additional appropriations. This would make it possible for 2,500 more people to enjoy a decent home and the added satisfaction of knowing that they had a major part in building it.

Another possibility under the single-family program, Mr. Chairman, and this is about to become a reality within the first 100 days of the Clinton Administration, is the use of vacant houses in the Farmers Home inventory to lease or rent with an option to buy to low-income people.

It is costly to the government to hold empty residences. Farmers Home has about 4,500 houses on its hands that it acquired through abandonment, foreclosure, voluntary conveyance or other means. That may sound like a lot, and it is, but it is a small percentage of the portfolio financed by Farmers Home.

What we are going to do, and do soon, is take those houses that have been in our inventory a long time, and we have been unable to sell, and make them available to public housing authorities, nonprofit organizations and community-based organizations for rent, with a purchase option, to needy people.

We have 386 of those houses across the country, with larger concentrations in 7 states and Puerto Rico: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas and Virginia.

Instead of putting out money to take care of those houses, we are going to earn some money, and put 386 families into decent houses. They will pay rent according to their income and will have an option to buy later on.

Mr. Chairman, we do not need any extra funding or any new legislation to do this. It is an example of what we expect to do whenever and wherever possible in existing programs.

In the regular single-family program, the rate of loan obligations this year is running about 4 percentage points ahead of last year. To meet anticipated need, we will advance third and fourth quarter apportionments within the next week.

Twenty-one States have nearly exhausted their fiscal year 1993 allocations, and most of the other States are rapidly depleting their funds. Advancing apportionments will make loan funds available during the peak construction season. This pick-up of activity in the single-family housing program obviously means jobs are being created -- and that is a welcome sign. It also means we have a lot of work yet to do.

Guarantees

The guaranteed single-family loan program is now in its second year on a nationwide basis. I know it is not popular with everyone, but it does have some valuable qualities. One is that it represents a public-private partnership; it proves that the Government and private sector can cooperate to meet human needs.

The guarantee program has two other features that make it valuable -- it enables us to help people of moderate income that we otherwise could not reach, and its cost to the Government is about 10 times less than the cost of the direct loan program per individual loan. In some States, we are finding some lenders can reach a number of low-income borrowers through the guaranteed program.

You made a valuable improvement in the program last year in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 by extending eligibility for guaranteed loans to people with incomes up to 115 percent of a State's median income. This will make it possible for people who had been unable to buy a house to now become homeowners.

Acceptance of the guaranteed approach in rural home financing has been growing in the lending community to the point where we now anticipate that the \$329.5 million authorized for this fiscal year will be used up sometime in May.

Guarantees are providing a good and valuable service, as I just mentioned, and we think they should be continued and expanded.

Home Repair Loans and Grants

Under this program, we can make loans to very-low-income homeowners and loans and/or grants to very-low-income elderly homeowners to help repair the premises and remove a health or safety hazard.

In Fiscal Year 1992, Farmers Home made 2,859 very-low-income home repair loans for \$11.3 million and 3,678 grants for \$12.8 million. The loans averaged just under \$4,000 each and the grants averaged slightly under \$3,500 each.

You can see that, on an individual basis, neither the loans nor grants were for substantial amounts. They did, however, help a number of people who had health or safety problems with their homes but who also had very restricted incomes with which to deal with the problems. In most cases, those people live on such a restricted income that there is simply no room for a major housing expenditure.

When I was a colleague of yours in the House, I had plenty of occasions to become acquainted with this program, and I know funds were always running out, especially for the grants.

That is still happening, at a time when the population group the program is designed to serve is growing rapidly. Between 1980 and 1990, the over-62 population grew by more than 6 million, a 19-percent increase. In rural areas alone, that age group grew by almost a million to just under 10 million altogether. That was a 9-percent increase.

Yet, with that growth in population -- and need -- funding for home repair has not changed to any degree for the last decade. It has been about \$25 million a year for both loans and grants, and the grant money always runs out early.

Given the need that I know is out there and given the relatively modest cost of the home repair program, I want to see its reach extended -- with funds to come from other programs, if necessary. I hope we can move forward with you on this.

Housing Preservation Grants

I associate this program in my mind with the home repair program because the projects serve essentially the same purpose of making existing housing livable with modest repairs or renovation -- often needed to meet local code requirements.

One successful example of fixing up older homes and keeping them as assets to the community can be found in Ducktown, a small, very-low income town in southeastern Tennessee.

I am told that one house there was in such poor condition that a woman fell through the floor and broke a hip. The town applied for and received a grant for \$158,500 to rehabilitate 28 homes. The average cost per home to Farmers Home will run about \$5,660 -- about the national average for the program -- and Ducktown will have 28 sound, livable houses instead of 28 structural derelicts. And 28 families will find that life has a new meaning.

It is evident that this program does a large amount of good at a relatively modest cost. Since its inception in 1986, appropriations have never exceeded \$23 million.

Last year, we funded 190 applications with that amount, with a single project typically providing assistance to 5 to 25 homes. Demand far exceeds availability of funds, and four applications are received for every one that can be funded.

As this program progresses, communities are finding it worth their while to make their own contributions. Since we adopted a policy of encouraging grantees to leverage funds from other sources, we estimate about \$20 million has been provided in that manner. In the case of Ducktown, the municipal government put up more than \$2,000 of its own fund and obtained \$42,000 from the State housing agency.

As with the regular home repair program, this is another case where a good living unit can be achieved at a fraction of the cost of a new home.

In both programs, there is an economic stimulus through jobs created to do the work. By and large, neighbors will be those employed. This results in increased economic activity at the basic community level -- where it is needed in so many rural areas.

Multi-Family Housing and Rental Assistance

The multi-family housing program has been a stable source of good quality rental housing in rural communities for the last 30 years. Farmers Home has invested more than \$12 billion in the program, and currently the portfolio has 440,000 rental units in 18,000 projects. Those apartments are home to 1.2 million people.

There are a couple of operating restraints, however, that need legislative attention.

Construction is currently being impeded by the lack of a low income housing tax credit. The tax credit expired last year and to date has not been extended.

Current appropriations language requires that certain amounts of rental assistance be allocated to new construction and certain amounts to renewal of existing contracts. We have no flexibility to change those allocations to meet demand as it may arise in either new or existing projects.

For example, in this fiscal year, there are insufficient funds to renew all existing rental assistance contracts. Tenants will lose this vital subsidy and suffer rent overburden -- rent exceeding 30 percent of their income. Worse yet, they may face eviction.

These outcomes could be avoided if we had the flexibility to transfer rental assistance from new construction to renewal of existing contracts. We also believe we should have the latitude to convert rural rental construction funds to rental assistance if new construction rental assistance funds become insufficient to meet subsidy needs on units being built.

The strictures on the use of rental assistance also create situations where new projects are sometimes built with rental assistance in markets where vacant units without access to rental assistance exist. These existing projects need rental assistance to fill the vacant units before new units are added to the area.

I mentioned rent overburden for tenants. That is another problem that is not being addressed, and it needs attention. We currently have more than 80,000 families paying more than 30 percent of their income for rent. In addition, we have more than 22,000 vacant units that could provide homes for 60,000 people if rental assistance were available. Let me cite some examples.

In Rosedale, Mississippi, a community with which I am very familiar, one apartment complex has 25 applicants on the waiting list for 6 vacancies. But without rental assistance none will be able to move in, and the apartments will remain vacant, to the detriment of the community, the tenants and the government.

In addition, several of the 10 existing tenants are paying up to 75 percent of their income in rent. As you know, rental assistance is supposed to permit tenants to hold their rent to 30 percent or less of their income.

In another community well known to me, Friars Point, Mississippi, 30 applicants are waiting for 10 vacancies. They need rental assistance, however, to move in and there is no rental assistance available.

The continuation of vacancies in situations such as these help give the projects a bad image in their communities and provide material for adverse audits. It is no secret that this program has been the subject of several critical reviews, and we are working to remove the underlying causes.

The rent overburden is a problem of different dimensions. It comes about because only 60 percent of our apartments units have rental assistance. We learned from our last tenant survey that 85 percent of the tenants earn less than 50 percent of the area median income -- the very-low-income level --and that 13 percent earn less than 80 percent of the area median income -- the low-income level.

You can see that we need some help in directing rental assistance to where it is most needed. We also must provide assistance that is flexible enough to meet the changing needs of rural Americans, such as providing vouchers that allow tenants to find available rental units.

Economic Stimulus

And now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to address the FMHA housing loan programs and the role they might play in the Clinton Administration's economic recovery package -- both for short term and longer term results.

The President's budget for fiscal year 1994 recognizes the importance of the rural housing programs. It includes significant increases for single-family direct and guaranteed loans, home repair and rental assistance.

In the short term, some additional funding will help create jobs and provide badly needed homes this fiscal year. Because we are already in the sixth month of the year, there are limits to how much extra money we could use effectively in the time remaining.

We believe we could use about \$244 million in additional funding in a judicious and effective way to meet current demand. We would allocate it in this manner: \$235 million for guaranteed single-family home loans; \$3 million for home repair loans, and \$6 million for home repair grants.

In each case, demand would be met through the remainder of this fiscal year and jobs would continue to increase.

For fiscal year 1994, the budget proposes an increase of \$300 million each for the single-family direct and guaranteed loan programs, and an increase of \$150 million in rental assistance through the use of grants and vouchers.

With these steps, I believe we will be making a considerable contribution to meeting the needs of our rural citizens and to the economic restructuring of our country.

This completes my formal statement, Mr. Chairman. I will be happy to respond to any questions.



News Releases-

Release No. 0158.93

Jim De Quattro (301) 504-8648

Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

DISEASE-RESISTANT PEACHES HAVE A CELL-CULTURED PEDIGREE

WASHINGTON, March 1--Peach trees whose ancestors were cells grown in a lab have passed their first field tests to thwart a bacterial disease, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist said.

"We now have the first evidence that this strategy can work against bacterial spot in an orchard," said plant physiologist Freddi Hammerschlag at USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

Bacterial spot damaged only 13 percent of peaches on Hammerschlag's best-performing trees--but nearly half the crop from conventional trees in the tests--according to a report in the latest issue of the agency's Agricultural Research magazine.

Hammerschlag said the bacterial culprit--*Xanthomonas campestris*--can damage leaves and fruit of every peach variety grown in the Southeast. It emits a toxin that attacks peach cell membranes. If a cell can't put up a defense, bacteria invade and multiply, and the cell dies.

Bacterial spot disease often makes peaches unmarketable and can even kill the tree by destroying its leaves, said Hammerschlag at the ARS Plant Molecular Biology Laboratory. The lab is part of the Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, Md.

She and two scientists at North Carolina State University planted about 150 test trees in the university's experimental orchard in 1987 and harvested peaches in 1990 and 1991. The 1992 crop was killed by late spring freezes.

Hammerschlag produced the trees by starting with millions of lab-cultured peach cells about six years ago. Her research strategy, known as in vitro selection, caused genetic changes--including changes that enabled a few cells to resist the bacteria.

She nurtured these resistant cells with plant hormones and nutrients, eventually producing midget trees smaller than alfalfa sprouts. From these midget, lab-produced trees, she grew normal-size peach trees for the field tests.

Next, Hammerschlag will evaluate the offspring of the top-performing trees. "Several genes apparently help the plant resist the disease. We'd like to isolate those genes so we can improve disease resistance even more," she said in the magazine story.

The story describes efforts by Hammerschlag and other researchers at the ARS lab to use in vitro selection or genetic engineering, or both, to boost nutrition, pest resistance and other qualities in soybean, rice, tomato, common bean, carrot, sugarbeet and other crops.

Hammerschlag and scientists from Italy and from Beltsville's Fruit Laboratory are using in vitro techniques to tackle a bacterial disease of apples, called crown rot.

She and colleague Ann Smigocki recently became the first scientists to succeed in regenerating whole peach plants from embryos to which they had transferred a new gene for cytokinin. Cytokinin is a key growth and developmental hormone in plants.

Hammerschlag and colleague Lowell Owens are trying to transfer other novel genes into fruit trees, including genes for a natural antibiotic to combat leaf spot and canker diseases in peach and fire blight in apple and pear.

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NOTE TO EDITOR: For details, contact Freddi Hammerschlag, plant physiologist Plant Molecular Biology Laboratory, USDA, ARS, Beltsville, Md. 20705, telephone (301) 504-5103.



Release No. 0159.93

Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

CCC INTEREST RATE FOR MARCH 3-3/8 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, March 1--Commodity loans disbursed in March by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 3-3/8 percent interest rate, according to Randy Weber, acting executive vice president of the CCC.

The 3-3/8 percent interest rate is down from February's 3-5/8 percent and reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in March.



Release No. 0160.93

Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES 1993 FARM PROGRAM COMMON PROVISIONS

WASHINGTON, March 1--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today announced common provisions for the 1993 commodity programs for wheat, feed grains, upland cotton, rice, soybeans and other oilseeds.

The 0-50/92 provisions remain available at producer's discretion. The estimated deficiency payment rates announced Jan. 29 and Feb. 2 are the minimum guaranteed payment rates for producers participating in the 0/92 wheat and feed grains and 50/92 upland cotton and rice programs.

As with the 1992 programs, 0/92 conserving use (CU) acreage may be planted, at the producer's discretion, to minor oilseeds (sunflower seed, safflower, flaxseed, canola, rapeseed

and mustard seed). If minor oilseeds are planted on this acreage, producers must choose whether to retain deficiency payment eligibility and waive price support program eligibility or retain price support program eligibility and waive deficiency payment eligibility.

Sesame and crambe may be planted on 0/92 and 50/92 acreage for the 1993-1995 crops and producers retain deficiency payment eligibility. Price support programs for sesame and crambe will not be offered.

When minor oilseeds, sesame and crambe are planted on 0/92 acreage, the acreage may also be subsequently planted to the same crops that may be planted on "flexible" acreage (excluding program crops) in the same crop year.

If soybeans are double-cropped, the farm must have an established history of double-cropping soybeans (for example, wheat followed by soybeans or feed grains followed by soybeans) during at least three of the past five years.

Producers must agree to forego price support program eligibility for the subsequently planted crop.

Dry peas (limited to Austrian peas, wrinkled seed, green, yellow and umatilla) and lentils may be planted on up to 20 percent of a wheat and feed grain Crop Acreage Base. Such acreage will be considered as planted to the program crop for planting history purposes.

Crops prohibited on the 1992 flexible acreage will also be prohibited on 1993 flexible acreage.

The planting of industrial and other crops other than minor oilseeds, sesame and crambe on 0-50/92 CU acreage will not be permitted. Targeted option payments will not be made available to producers.

Planting of designated crops on the announced acreage conservation reserve (ACR) will not be permitted.

Planting of oats for harvest on ACR under the wheat and feed grain programs will not be permitted.

Malting barley will not be exempted from acreage reduction requirements for the 1993 crop of barley.

Program signup will be March 1 through April 30. Additional information may be obtained at county offices of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.



Release No. 0161.93

Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

COMMENTS SOUGHT ON MARKETING LOANS FOR 1993-1995 CROPS WHEAT AND FEED GRAIN

WASHINGTON, March 1--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation is seeking public comment on marketing loan provisions for the 1993-1995 crops of wheat and feed grains.

Randy Weber, acting executive vice president of CCC, said that CCC is required to implement marketing loan provisions for the 1993 through 1995 crops of wheat and feed grains under provisions of the 1990 farm bill. They were triggered when the United States did not enter into an agricultural agreement by June 30, 1992, in connection with the Uruguay Round negotiations under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

"Producers should realize that marketing loan provisions do not involve a new loan program," Weber said. "Marketing loan provisions simply modify existing loan programs to

allow repayment at the lesser of the amount of the outstanding loan principal plus interest or the marketing loan repayment rate."

CCC proposes setting the marketing loan repayment rates at the same level as posted county prices. Posted county prices are the prices at which generic certificates can currently be exchanged for CCC-owned wheat and feed grains.

CCC also proposes loan deficiency payments be authorized for 1993-95 crops of wheat and feed grains. Details appear in the March 4 Federal Register.

The proposed regulations will be published in the March 4 Federal Register. Comments must be submitted by March 31 to: Deputy Administrator for Policy Analysis, Room 3742-S, USDA/ASCS, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C., 20013-2415.

Comments will be available for public inspection in Room 3742, South Building, USDA, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. during normal business hours. A regulatory impact analysis on the 1993-95 crop wheat and feed grain marketing loan provisions may also be obtained from the above address.



Release No. 0162.93

Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES ADVANCE DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS FOR 1993 ELS COTTON

WASHINGTON, March 1--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced that producers who enroll in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 1993 Extra Long Staple Cotton Program may request 50 percent of their estimated deficiency payments during signup.

The estimated payment rate and advance payment rate are 17.58 and 8.79 cents per pound, respectively. Signup will be March 1 through April 30 at USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service county offices.



Release No. 0163.93

Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES 1993 ACREAGE ALLOTMENTS, PRICE SUPPORT FOR 6 KINDS OF TOBACCO

WASHINGTON, March 1--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced acreage allotments and price support levels for six kinds of tobacco for the 1993 marketing year.

The 1993 allotments and support levels are included in the following table for comparison:

Kind of Tobacco	National Allotment (Acres)		Support Level (\$/lb.)		Marketing Assessment		
	1993	1992	1993	1992	Growers	Buyers	Total
							(cents/lb.)
Virginia fire-cured (type 21)	1,472	2,158	1.395	1.367	.6975	.6975	1.395
Kentucky-Tennessee (Fire-cured) - types 22-23)	16,910	15,789	1.464	1.421	.7320	.7320	1.464

Dark air-cured (types 35-36)	5,312	5,342	1.255	1.217	.6275	.6275	1.255
Virginia sun-cured (type 37)	99	128	1.233	1.208	.6165	.6165	1.233
Cigar filler and binder (types 42-44 and 53-55)	7,246	10,613	1.074	1.054	.5370	.5370	1.074
Cigar filler (type 46)	0	0	.834	0	.4170	.4170	.834

The price support levels for 1993 range between 1.9 and 3.0 percent higher than the 1992-crop levels. The cooperative marketing associations, through which price support is made available to eligible producers, are authorized to request a reduction in the price support level to improve the marketability of the tobacco.

USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation will establish individual grade loan rates before the marketing season begins.

The 1993-crop marketing assessment to be paid by both growers and buyers will be 0.5 percent of the support level for a total of 1 percent per pound.

Except for farms on which producers in recent years have planted or received planted credit of less than 75 percent of the farm's acreage allotment, 1993 tobacco allotments are reduced 30 percent for Virginia fire-cured, 20 percent for Virginia sun-cured and 30 percent for cigar filler and binder while tobacco allotments are increased 7 percent for Kentucky-Tennessee fire-cured from 1992 and remain the same for dark air-cured and Puerto Rican cigar filler.

USDA will hold two separate referenda for producers to determine whether growers want marketing quotas for marketing years 1993, 1994 and 1995. Growers of cigar filler and binder (types 42-44 and 54-55) will vote by mail ballot March 22-25. Growers of cigar filler (type 46) will vote at polling places on March 24. If more than one-third of the tobacco producers who vote oppose quotas, marketing quotas of that kind of tobacco will not be in effect for the 1993 marketing year. Quotas for the 1990-92 crops of cigar filler and binder tobacco (types 42-44 and 54-56) were approved in a 1990 referendum, but producers of cigar filler tobacco (type 46) rejected quotas for the 1992-94 crops in March 1992.

Notices of the 1993 allotments for individual farms and voting information will be mailed to producers by USDA's county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committees.



Release No. 0164.93
Jim De Quattro (301) 504-8648
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

USDA INSECT HUNTERS NET HUGE 1992 HARVEST OF NATURAL FOES OF WHITEFLY

WASHINGTON, March 2--Natural enemies of sweetpotato whiteflies, including wasps found in Egyptian whitefly "mummies," were collected and shipped in record numbers last year by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists in France.

"Our entomologists shipped 17 different species of whitefly enemies. This gives researchers in the U.S. the most diverse pool to date of natural candidates for controlling whiteflies," said Richard S. Soper at the Agricultural Research Service in Beltsville, Md.

"Whitefly enemies were collected from a wide variety of climates and growing seasons in six countries last year," Soper said. "This diversity improves the odds that researchers can match a specific natural enemy with U.S. areas where it would do the best job against the whitefly." The pest has cost growers in California, Arizona, Texas and Florida millions of dollars in losses to lettuce, melon, squash, cotton and other crops since its discovery in Florida in 1987.

The thousands of wasps, beetles and fungi in 62 shipments went to ARS quarantine labs in Mississippi and Delaware and an insectary in Texas operated by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. USDA, state and university scientists receiving the organisms will see how well they can adapt to U.S. farm fields, said Soper, ARS assistant administrator for international research programs.

ARS entomologists Alan Kirk and Lawrence Lacey found mummies last spring that may be uniquely suited to hot dry climates of the southwestern U.S. on an island in Egypt's Nile River near Aswan High Dam.

"Scientists refer to pupae killed by parasites as mummies," Kirk said. Only dried husks of whiteflies were left after the pests became infested with tiny immature parasitic wasps, he said. The wasps--*Encarsia transvena* and two species of *Eretmocerus*, devoured the whiteflies during the pests' pupal stage, a cocoon-like state just before adulthood.

"Last year, Lawrence Lacey and I spent 117 days finding and collecting whitefly-killing wasps, beetles and fungi in Spain, Crete, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Egypt," said Kirk. He and Lacey are based at the ARS European Biological Control Laboratory in Montpellier, France.

Kirk and Lacey did most of their collecting in crop fields and greenhouses. "But in Crete," said Lacey, "we found parasitic wasps in whiteflies on a flowering wild sweetpotato plant by a cafe where we had stopped for lunch."

In India, the two scientists collected a whitefly-killing fungus near Madras. The fungus, *Paecilomyces fumosoroseus*, might thrive in regions with a hot, humid climate similar to southern India's, like Florida or the Gulf Coast, Lacey said.

The scientists saw an even more impressive outbreak of this fungus in Multan, Pakistan. "One of the exciting aspects of this find is that Multan is hot and dry more than ten months of the year," Lacey said. "The fungus survives that hot, dry period, probably in the soil, and it multiplies rapidly after the monsoon rains arrive. The Multan strains of this fungus may be adapted to survival in hot, arid areas of the U.S."

Kirk and Lacey plan to collect more whitefly enemies this year in Egypt, Sicily, Spain and Greece. In addition, their collaborators in India, Pakistan and Nepal will send shipments to Montpellier and the U.S., according to Soper.

"It usually takes several years," Soper said, "for an imported natural enemy to multiply in its new home and start taking its toll on an insect or weed pest, but in the long term this approach can be the best alternative to chemical pesticides."



Release No. 0165.93
Joel Berg (202) 720-4623

NATIONAL SERVICE IS AMERICA AT ITS BEST, SAYS SECRETARY ESPY

WASHINGTON, March 2--In a speech today to Howard University's Charter Day Convocation, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced that President Clinton's National Service plan is America at its best--building community, offering opportunity and rewarding responsibility. Espy, who as a Congressman was a co-sponsor of the National and Community Service Bill of 1989, has long been a supporter of voluntary national service.

"The president's plan will take us down a new road. To be sure, this road is also rocky. It's also steep. When we take that path, it might be difficult for the first few miles. We have to tighten our belts. But this road will take us where we want to go, a road we can now travel together, and most importantly, it is a road that will help us build for our future rather than borrow from our future," said Espy.

"The president's call to national service is rooted in the concept of community. It's rooted in the view that when we come together, and work together, we can solve our problems, and

make our country better. It's rooted in the ideal that each of us has an obligation to serve--that service is the rent we pay for the time we are allotted on earth. Just as past generations of youth met the challenge of civil rights at home, and human rights abroad--today's generation of students must have the opportunity to meet the needs of our communities today."

"Years ago at Howard, there was a project called HUMP - Howard University Mississippi Project. Students in HUMP went down to Mississippi to help teach people how to vote and to help teach people how to read. Of course a few years before HUMP, in 1964 hundreds of students from throughout the north came to Mississippi to participate in Freedom Summer. Most of those students were white -but they came to Mississippi to do what was right. They came, and three of them even gave their lives, so that Black Mississippians could have the right to vote. They were young, and they were idealistic--and they had a vision of what Mississippi could be, and what America could be. They had a higher purpose beyond their own individual comfort or desires. And that's the spirit the President wants to rekindle with his proposal for voluntary national service."



Release No. 0166.93
Robert M. Feist (202) 720-6789
Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PROCEDURES FOR ACCEPTANCE OF STORAGE AND HANDLING RATES

WASHINGTON, March 2--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has set the criteria for accepting storage and handling rates offered by warehousemen to store grain, rice and minor oilseeds under the Uniform Grain Storage Agreement and the Uniform Rice Storage Agreement.

The criteria apply to warehouse agreements entered into during the 1993-94 contract year (April 1, 1993 through March 31, 1994), according to Randy Weber, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

Under the offer-acceptance method, warehousemen submit offers for rates at which they will store and handle grain. If a warehouseman offers rates that are considered unacceptable to the CCC, the rates are rejected and the warehouseman is given the opportunity to adjust them to an acceptable level.

"About 70 percent of the offers for wheat were the same as or lower than last year, while 90 percent of the offers for corn and other grains were the same as or lower than the previous year," Weber said. "The offers reflect the reduction in CCC stocks of grain and competition within the storage industry to store remaining stocks."

Weber emphasized that CCC will continue to move CCC grain from higher cost facilities into lower cost warehouses during the coming year.

The maximum storage rate may not exceed 38 cents per bushel per year and the maximum handling rates may not total more than 19 1/2 cents per bushel. Neither the "in" nor "out" charge may exceed 10 cents. Also, the rates may not exceed the warehouseman's current CCC storage rates by more than 1 cent per bushel per year for storage and by more than 1/2 cent per bushel per year (total) for handling.

If during the 1992-93 contract year the warehouseman decreased his storage or handling rate from that accepted by CCC, the warehouseman may increase his rate for the 1993-94 contract year by the amount of the 1992-93 contract year decrease plus 1 cent for storage and 1/2 cent for handling. However, the 1993-94 contract year rate may not exceed the maximum acceptable rates.



Release No. 0168.93
 Gene Rosera (202) 720-6734
 Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, March 2--Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Charles J. O'Mara today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 8.07 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 7.18 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 7.15 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 4.04 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, loan deficiency payment rates and gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price level are:

- for long grain, \$1.68 per hundredweight;
- for medium grain, \$1.61 per hundredweight;
- for short grain, \$1.62 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made March 9 at 3 p.m. EST.



Release No. 0170.93
 Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206
 Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

ELIGIBLE 1992 CORN AND SORGHUM PRODUCERS DUE FARM PROGRAM PAYMENTS

WASHINGTON, March 3--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy said today the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will make about \$2.7 billion in cash deficiency payments this month to eligible producers of 1992 crop corn and sorghum.

According to Espy, corn producers will receive about \$2.5 billion in additional deficiency and 0/92 payments. Most corn producers requested advance deficiency payments and were paid about \$1.2 billion.

Sorghum producers will receive about \$225 million in additional deficiency and 0/92 payments, Espy said. Sorghum producers who requested advance deficiency payments during the 1992 feed grain program signup have already received payments of about \$105 million.

Deficiency payment rates are the difference between the established target price for the commodity and the higher of the five-month average market price or the basic price support rate for the commodity. Average corn and sorghum prices for the first five months of the 1992 marketing year fell between the respective basic price support rates and target prices.

The following table shows the calculations used to determine the deficiency payments for corn and sorghum producers:

	Corn (\$/bu.)	Sorghum
A. Target Price	2.75	2.61
B. Basic Price Support Level	2.01	1.91
C. 1992 5-Month Average Market Price	2.02	1.85
D. Deficiency Payment Rate (A minus C)	0.73	0.70

Producers who did not request advance deficiency payments will receive 73 cents per bushel in corn payments and 70 cents per bushel in sorghum payments. Corn producers who received advance deficiency payments will receive 49 cents per bushel. Sorghum producers who received advance deficiency payments will receive 47 cents per bushel.

Under the 0/92 provision of the 1992 feed grain program, participants had the option of underplanting program crop acreage bases while still earning program payments. These producers were guaranteed to receive no less than the projected final deficiency payment rates estimated at the time of enrollment in the 1992 feed grain program.

The projected 1992 deficiency payment rates of \$0.48 per bushel for corn and \$0.46 per bushel for sorghum were lower than the actual rates. Therefore, these producers will be paid on the basis of the actual higher rates.



Release No. 0172.93
Jan Suszkiw (301) 504-8095
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

ASIAN PEST DETECTED IN BRAZIL COULD BE THREAT TO U.S. CROPS

WASHINGTON, March 4--A Southeast Asian beetle that could devastate potato, tomato and other crops in South America and the United States has been discovered in Brazil, say U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists.

This marks the first report of the Asian pest *Epilachna vigintioctopunctata* in the western hemisphere, said Robert F.W. Schroder, a research entomologist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service. He said the pest belongs to the same beetle family as the Mexican bean beetle, a crop pest, and lady bugs that prey on crop-damaging insects in this country. Because the beetle's populations in Brazil are still low, measures can be taken to trace the pest's movement and use bait traps or parasitic wasps to control it, Schroder said.

He said ARS entomologist Robert D. Gordon has confirmed the identity of the beetle, using specimens collected in Brazil in 1991. Gordon works in the agency's Systematic Entomology Laboratory at the Beltsville, Md., Agricultural Research Center.

Schroder and entomologist Michael M. Athanas first spotted the beetle while in Brazil in 1990. Schroder and Athanas are based at the ARS Insect Biocontrol Laboratory at Beltsville.

Produce shipped from Southeast Asia may have accidentally carried the pest into Brazil, Schroder said. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has added the Asian beetle to its quarantine list for potential pests of U.S. agriculture.

The black-spotted, yellowish-brown pest feeds on leaf tissue of alfalfa, beet, clover, cotton, cowpea, eggplant, gourd, potato, squash, soybean, tobacco and tomato plants. Severe infestations weaken host plants by robbing them of their energy-producing tissues, Schroder said.

Wasps such as *Pediobius foveolatus* naturally control *Epilachna* beetles by using beetle larvae as hosts for their own eggs, according to Paul W. Schaefer, a research entomologist at the ARS Beneficial Insects Introduction Laboratory at Newark, Del.

"South America is rich in species of *Epilachna* and among those species there have to be a lot of natural enemies," Schaefer said. "I wouldn't be surprised if those enemies switched over to *E. vigintioctopunctata*."

The beetle is a serious crop pest in India, Pakistan, Australia, islands of the South Pacific and in Asian countries such as China.

"My experience of it in China was that it was devastating on eggplant," said Schaefer. "Farmers relied heavily on chemicals and sprayed repeatedly to get any kind of fruit."

Schroder said he and Athanas were on a Brazilian expedition with Moldavian, Russian, Argentine and Brazilian scientists when they first sighted the Asian pest. "We were looking for biocontrol agents of the Colorado potato beetle when we just happened to notice it on cucurbit vines," Schroder recalled. "At first I thought it was the Mexican bean beetle because of its similarity."



Release No. 0173.93
Janise Zygmunt (202) 720-6734
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, March 4--Randy Weber, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, Mar. 11. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Mar. 12, through midnight Thursday, March 18.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 92 percent of the 1992 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 3.68 cents per pound.

Following are the relevant calculations:

I.	Calculated AWP	47.94 cents per pound
	1992 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
	AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	92
II.	USNE Price	65.30 cents per pound
	NE Price	<u>-61.62</u> cents per pound
	Maximum Adjustment Allowed	3.68 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price	61.62
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	11.82
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.55
Average U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	- 13.68
Calculated AWP	47.94
Further AWP adjustment	- 0
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	47.94 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	61.62
NE Coarse Count Price	- 57.23
	4.39
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	- 3.95
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT.....	0.44 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is below the 1991 and 1992 base quality loan rates of 50.77 and 52.35 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1992-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1992 crop. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain a loan deficiency payment on a bale-by-bale basis.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1992 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is 2.43 cents per pound. This rate is applicable for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to September 30, 1993. Relevant data used in determining the user marketing certificate payment rate are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	USNE Price	NE Price	USNE Minus NE	User Certificate Payment Rate 1/
		cents per pound	
1	Feb. 11, 1993	65.15	60.26	4.89	3.64
2	Feb. 18, 1993	65.95	60.94	5.01	3.76
3	Feb. 25, 1993	65.85	61.80	4.05	2.80
4	Mar. 4, 1993	65.30	61.62	3.68	2.43

1/ USNE price minus NE price minus 1.25 cents.

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, Mar. 11.



GREAT PLAINS WIND EROSION DOWN FROM LAST YEAR

WASHINGTON, March 5--Wind erosion on cropland and rangeland decreased significantly in the Great Plains States during November and December 1992 compared to the same period a year earlier, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service reported today.

Galen Bridge, acting chief of SCS, announced that nearly 1.24 million acres of cropland and rangeland were damaged--almost 350,000 acres less than in November and December 1991.

Bridge attributed the decreases to implementation of conservation plans under the Farm Bill provisions and the Great Plains Conservation Program. Areas of least soil and crop damage experienced good moisture and growth in the fall and some protective snow cover, he said.

Wind erosion in the Northern Great Plains decreased by 155,889 acres--a 13-percent drop from last year. In the Southern Great Plains, 183,196 acres were damaged--less than one-half of last year's amount. Of the total land damaged, about 91 percent was cropland; the rest was primarily rangeland.

More than 10.5 million acres were reported in condition to blow. This is 27 percent less than last year's figure.

Emergency tillage and surface roughening to prevent land damage was reported on 850,779 acres--66 percent above the average for the years 1967-92.

SCS reports land damaged when small mounds or drifts of soil are observed, or blown soil covers vegetation. SCS conducts its survey during the wind erosion season in 541 counties in the Great Plains States.

Below is a state-by-state comparison between wind erosion damage that took place in November and December 1992 and the same period in 1991.

Wind Erosion Damage, November-December 1992 and 1991

---Estimated Acres Damaged---

	11/92-12/92	11/91-12/91
Northern Great Plains		
Montana	138,170	342,460
Nebraska	7,450	15,580
North Dakota	747,849	692,420
South Dakota	72,880	106,060
Wyoming	90,285	56,003
Subtotal	1,056,634	1,212,523
Southern Great Plains		
Colorado	2,350	15,850
Kansas	8,900	86,050
New Mexico	0	1,550
Oklahoma	45,240	19,020
Texas	126,706	253,208
Subtotal	183,196	375,678
TOTAL	1,239,830	1,588,201

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Release No. 0175.93
 Alicia L. Ford (202) 720-8998
 Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

USDA APPOINTS COTTON MARKETING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, March 5--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced the appointments of 16 members and eight alternates, one for every two members, to the Advisory Committee on Cotton Marketing.

Espy said the Committee has been re-established and appointments made subject to continuing review of federal advisory committees and boards throughout the Executive Branch. All terms will expire on Sept. 30, 1993.

L.P. Massaro, acting administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the committee's purpose is to review federal programs administered by USDA that impact on the cotton marketing system and recommend ways of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs.

The members of the committee represent cotton producers, ginner, cooperatives, merchants and manufacturers, as well as the warehouse and research sectors of the cotton industry.

Producer appointees to the committee consist of one grower from each of the four general areas of production, and two grower alternates, as follows:

West -- Fred L. Starrh, Shafter, Calif.; Southwest -- Craig D. Shook, Corpus Christi, Texas; Mid-South -- Harold L. Lewis, Dell, Ark.; Southeast -- W. L. Carter Jr., Scotland Neck, N.C., with alternates William T. Lovelady, Tornillo, Texas and John E. Pucheu Jr., Tranquillity, Calif.

Appointed to represent ginner are Daniel Wayne Mixon, Seminole, Texas; and Mary Ann R. Arnold, Marked Tree, Ark. with alternate Charles B. Coley, Vienna, Ga.

Appointed to represent cooperatives are Woods E. Eastland, Indianola, Miss.; and Thomas W. Smith, Bakersfield, Calif. with alternate Van Allan May, Ransom Canyon, Texas.

Appointed to represent manufacturers are Willard Duke Kimbrell, Gastonia, N.C.; and Chessley B. Howard, Augusta, Ga., with alternate Dewey L. Trogon, Greensboro, N.C.

Appointed to represent warehouses are John Darwin Davis Jr., Decatur, Ala.; and Fred A. Underwood, Lubbock, Texas, with alternate Reeder W. Dossett, Valley Mills, Texas.

Appointed to represent merchants are William B. Dunavant Jr., Memphis, Tenn.; and William D. Lawson III, Gastonia, N.C. with alternate Jane Anne Stinnett, Lubbock, Texas.

Appointed to represent the research community are Preston E. Sasser, Raleigh, N.C.; and Harvin R. Smith, Lubbock, Texas, with alternate William D. Mayfield, Germantown, Tenn.



Release No. 0176.93
 Ed Curlett (301) 436-7799
 Edwin Moffett (202) 720-4026

EMERGENCY FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE FOR CONTINUED MEDFLY ERADICATION

WASHINGTON, March 5--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today the Clinton Administration has transferred \$16.46 million in emergency funds needed for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to continue its cooperative effort to eradicate the Mediterranean fruit fly in California.

Espy's request for additional funds was approved by Office of Management and Budget Director Leon Panetta.

"These funds allow APHIS to continue its support in California through the end of the fiscal year in the joint effort to eliminate Medflies from two areas of the state," Espy said.

About \$9.4 million had been transferred to APHIS from the Commodity Credit Corporation in December 1992.

California authorities and APHIS quarantined part of San Jose County and parts of three counties in the Los Angeles area last fall because of outbreaks of Medflies.

Federal and state employees have been regulating the movement of fruits and vegetables, trapping for Medflies, applying ground sprays, and releasing sterile flies in these locations in an effort to eradicate the pest.

The Mediterranean fruit fly is one of the world's most destructive pests. It attacks more than 200 kinds of fruits and vegetables. Heavy infestations can cause complete loss of crops. Losses of 25 to 50 percent are not uncommon in countries where this pest is established.



Release No. 0177.93
Joel Berg (202) 720-4623

ESPY SUSPENDS SOME FARM FORECLOSURES PENDING INDEPENDENT REVIEW

SIOUX FALLS, S.D., March 5--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced tonight he is suspending Farmers Home Administration foreclosure actions not yet referred to a court, pending review by an independent panel.

"One of my priorities as secretary of agriculture is to ensure that FmHA is a friend in need," said Espy, who made the announcement during remarks to the National Farmers Union. "A lot of farmers going through foreclosures feel that they're not always being treated by the book."

Espy said he has directed every state FmHA office to immediately suspend all pending foreclosure cases that have not yet been referred to the courts for action. These borrowers will soon receive a certified letter informing them that they have 30 days to ask that their case be reviewed by an independent review board.

The board will assess whether all FmHA procedures were followed, and where necessary, determine whether cases should be referred back to FmHA for corrective action. The panel's members will be named shortly.

"I'm optimistic about the prospects for agriculture under this administration," Espy said. "But I know that many American farmers have been facing tough times. Every farmer struggles against the prospect of foreclosure, or knows someone who couldn't stay afloat. When that time comes, farmers turn to the FmHA."

"Let no one be mistaken as to the larger message," said Espy. "This administration, and this secretary of agriculture, is going to keep a close eye on the FmHA process to make sure that every American farmer facing foreclosure will be treated fairly and equally under the law."



FEATURE-

Release No. 0167.93
 Susan Conley (202) 690-0351
 Edwin Moffett (202) 720-4026

HOTLINE GIVES HAMBURGER SAFETY TIPS

WASHINGTON, March 2--Fast food hamburgers have been making the headlines recently. More than 400 persons in the Northwest became ill after eating undercooked hamburgers containing E. coli 0157:H7, a rare strain of bacteria which is particularly dangerous to the very young and old.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is planning to update its inspection system so it will be able to determine the presence of harmful pathogens not detectable by visual inspection. "Even with the added scrutiny, inspection will not substitute for the proper cooking and handling of raw meats," said Susan Conley, manager of USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline. "A number of Hotline callers recently have been asking about the safety of cooking hamburgers at home," Conley said. "Raw hamburger must be handled properly because of the potential of contamination by harmful bacteria. Cooking kills bacteria. If hamburgers are safely handled and thoroughly cooked, they won't make you sick."

Bacteria can be present in any ground beef as well as other raw foods such as poultry, fish and eggs. Some bacteria cause food to spoil. Others--such as Salmonella, Campylobacter jejuni, Listeria monocytogenes, Escherichia coli 0157:H7 and Staphylococcus aureus--can cause illness.

USDA recommends against eating raw or undercooked ground beef since harmful bacteria could be present. But safe food handling is also important in preventing foodborne illness. Here are some hamburger safety tips from the home economists at the Meat and Poultry Hotline.

--HANDLING GROUND BEEF

At the store, be sure to choose a package that's not torn and that feels cold. If possible, enclose it in a plastic bag so juices won't drip on other foods. Make ground beef and other perishables your final purchase of the trip.

After leaving the store, get perishables home quickly and refrigerate or freeze them immediately. If the trip home is more than an hour, pack them in an ice chest. When handling raw ground beef, don't let its juices contaminate foods that won't be cooked. Wash your hands with soap and hot water before and after handling ground beef to make sure you don't spread bacteria from one surface to another.

Don't reuse any packaging materials. Use soap and hot water to wash utensils and surfaces which have come into contact with the raw meat. When taking hamburgers off the grill, don't put the cooked hamburgers on the same platter which held the raw patties.

--STORING GROUND BEEF

Bacteria multiply rapidly in the "danger zone" between 40 and 140°F. To keep bacterial levels low, store ground beef at 40°F and use or freeze it within two days. Ground beef kept frozen at 0°F will maintain its quality up to four months.

--DEFROSTING AND COOKING HAMBURGERS SAFELY

Keeping meat cold while it is defrosting is essential to prevent the growth of bacteria. Never leave ground beef, or any perishable food, out on the counter for more than two hours. Thaw it in the refrigerator.

To be sure bacteria are destroyed, cook hamburgers to 160°F (medium doneness) or until the center is no longer pink and the juices are clear.

When cooking out, do not partially grill extra hamburgers to use later. Once you begin cooking hamburgers by any method, cook them until completely done to assure that bacteria are destroyed.

Refrigerate hamburgers promptly after cooking. Any left out at room temperature for more than two hours should be discarded. After cooking, ground beef can be stored in the refrigerator for three to four days or frozen up to three months.

When reheating fully-cooked patties, be sure their internal temperature reaches 165°F or they are hot and steaming.

At restaurants, order your hamburger cooked to "medium" or "well done," and check for doneness when it is served.

For further information about handling and cooking hamburgers safely, call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555 weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time. Washington, D.C. area residents call 202-720-3333.



